



LOUISIANA SENATE

LOUISIANA POSITIVES

EDUCATION

- ◆ **J.S. Clark Elementary in Monroe and W.W. Stewart Elementary School in Evangeline Parish were honored as Distinguished Schools by the National Association of State Title I Directors. The program recognizes two schools from each state every year based on criteria outlined in the national No Child Left Behind Act for achieving a level of progress for two or more consecutive years (The Town Talk, December 2010).**
- ◆ **A total of 148 teachers in Louisiana earned national certification, an advanced teaching credential, in 2010. The state has the 13th-highest number of newly certified teachers in the nation and 16th overall. This growth brings Louisiana's total to 1,681. There are about 8,600 nationally certified teachers in the country (The Advocate, December 2010).**
- ◆ **"Prime Time Family Reading Time," a Louisiana program aimed at breaking the cycle of illiteracy in at-risk families has become a national model among reading initiatives. A 10-year study of the program showed that children who graduated from the program had significantly higher standardized test scores than a control group of non-participating students. Thirty-eight states have embraced the Prime Time model. There are now 1,083 Prime Time sites across the country and 38,905 participants have been reached since the program began in 1991 (The Advocate, December 2010).**
- ◆ **A national report, done by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, said that Louisiana is ahead of the national curve in preparing teachers in understanding child and adolescent development, which has been a part of teacher training in the state since 2003 (The Lake Charles American Press, October 2010).**
- ◆ **According to the Louisiana Department of Education, 40 percent more public schools are earning a School Performance Score of 100 or higher than in 2009. Additionally, the state's growth and baseline performance scores are the highest earned since Louisiana's accountability system was launched in 1999 for the third consecutive year (Louisiana Department of Education, October 2010).**
- ◆ **Four Louisiana public schools were honored as 2010 National Blue Ribbon Schools by the United States Department of Education for either academic superiority or making substantial gains in student achievement. Ruby Wise Elementary in Rapides Parish,**

Eunice Elementary in St. Landry Parish, Ryan Elementary in East Baton Rouge Parish and Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy in Jefferson parish were all winners (Louisiana Department of Education, September 2010).

- ◆ Louisiana's efforts to align key components of college and career readiness are once again being recognized by a leading national education reform group. Achieve, a non-profit education organization based in Washington, D.C., released its fifth annual "Closing the Expectations Gap" report which shows that Louisiana is one of only 11 states meeting three or more critical benchmarks in successfully aligning education efforts with the expectations of colleges and employers (Closing the Expectation Gap, March 2010).
- ◆ Louisiana ranks 27th in the nation for its public education policies and performance but earned a near-perfect score in the area of Standards, Assessments and Accountability in *Education Week's* "Quality Counts 2010". The category is of primary importance to states, as standards and accountability have become the focus of education initiatives. Louisiana earned an "A", as it did in 2009, and placed third in this category, behind top-ranked West Virginia and second-place Indiana (Education Week, January 2010).

HIGHER EDUCATION

- ◆ The trade journal, *The Scientist*, ranks Pennington Biomedical Research Center fourth on a list of "Best Places to Work for Postdocs." The journal's annual listing surveys more than 1,500 post-doctoral fellows around the world and bases its assessment on working environment, quality of facilities and infrastructure and the value of the post-doctoral experience, compensation and benefits (The Advocate, April 2012).
- ◆ Louisiana Tech University in Ruston has again been named to the 2012 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll and recognized by the Corporation for National and Community Service for its leadership among state institutions of higher education in the state in supporting volunteerism, service-learning and civic engagement. Louisiana Tech is the only public university in north Louisiana and only institution in the University of Louisiana System to make the honor roll every year since 2008 (The News Star, March 2012).
- ◆ Louisiana State University's landscape architecture program has been ranked the nation's best for three of the past six years, and for the past two years, LSU's postgraduate program has been second only to that of Harvard University (The Advocate, February 2012).
- ◆ Eleven Louisiana Community and Technical College System institutions have been ranked among the top associate degree and certificate producers in the country by *Community College Week* magazine's 2011 edition of the Top 100 Associate Degree Producers. Acadiana Technical College (Lafayette Campus), Bossier Parish Community

College (Bossier City), Capital Area Technical College (Baton Rouge Campus), Central Louisiana Technical College (Alexandria Campus), Delgado Community College (New Orleans), L.E. Fletcher Technical Community College (Houma), Northeast Louisiana Technical College (Delta Ouachita Campus in West Monroe), Northshore Technical College (Sullivan Campus in Bogalusa), Northwest Louisiana Technical College, South Central Louisiana Technical College (Young Memorial Campus in Morgan City) and Sowela Technical Community College (Lake Charles) were mentioned (The News Star, July 2011).

- ◆ The MPA program at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette made The Princeton Review's "The Best 300 Schools" list (The Advocate, October 2010).
- ◆ The LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center ranks 80th, up from 88th two years ago, on the list of "America's Best Graduate Schools." Tulane University also placed in the top 100, tying for 48th place (U.S. News and World Report, The Advocate, April 2010).
- ◆ Rudolf "Rudy" Hirschheim, Ourso Family Distinguished Professor of Information Systems in LSU's E.J. Ourso College of Business has been recognized as one of the top researchers in the world for his field by two different studies. Lin and Gregor, which ranked the productivity of information systems researchers from around the world using the top six journals in the field, ranked Hirschheim second. Truex et. al., which used the Hirsch family of indices to evaluate research influence and looked at over 4,000 candidates, ranked Hirschheim among the top 10 to 15 researchers in the world (The Advocate, April 2010).
- ◆ A new report by The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government shows that three Louisiana universities are of the top 100 public research universities in the nation. LSU, including the main campus, Pennington Biomedical Research Center and LSU AgCenter is first in Louisiana and 45th in the nation, Louisiana State University Health Science Center - New Orleans and Shreveport - rank second in the state and 95th in the nation. UL is ranked third in Louisiana and 99th in the country. The total research dollars of all three institutions, \$373.3 million, earned Louisiana a ranking of 27th in the country (The Advertiser, March 2010).
- ◆ Two of the state's higher education institutions have been ranked among the Top 100 values in public four year education by Kiplinger's Personal Finance. LSU ranked 47th and Louisiana Tech was ranked 92nd for students considering in-state public campus choices. The list reflects the quality of education and considers graduation rates. Criteria also included the wealth of academic choices on campus and financial aid (Kiplinger's, January 2010).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ In Pollina Corporate Real Estate Inc.'s annual ranking of top pro-business states, Louisiana climbed 24 spots to No. 16, making it the most improved state in the country over the last four years. Pollina ranks the 50 states on 32 factors, including evaluation metrics such as business tax burdens, workforce training programs, workers compensation costs, economic development incentives, energy costs, marketing programs and state economic development efforts (The Office of the Governor, September 2012).
- ◆ According to the World Trade Center of New Orleans, Louisiana's exports increased 5 percent in the second quarter compared with the same period last year. The overall value of Louisiana's exports, measuring products that originate and pass through the state, was \$28.3 billion, up from \$26.0 billion in the previous year (The Advocate, August 2012).
- ◆ *Business Facilities* magazine named Louisiana FastStart the No. 1 workforce program in the country for the third year in a row, noting its impressive diversity and coordination of economic development efforts across the state. Louisiana FastStart provides customized recruitment, screening and training to companies expanding in or relocating to Louisiana at no cost (The Office of the Governor, July 2012).
- ◆ Business Facilities magazine ranked Louisiana 5th for Best Business Climate, up from 7th in 2011, the state's highest ever business climate ranking and first for economic growth potential (The Office of the Governor, July 2012).
- ◆ Louisiana ranks second nationwide in the value of merchandise received in its foreign-trade zones and fifth in the number of people employed there, according to a report by the National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones (The Advocate, July 2012).
- ◆ According to the National Chamber Foundation, Louisiana was among states with the highest job growth between January 2011 and January 2012, as the state's economy was boosted by exports of energy and agricultural products. Louisiana is ranked as the No.1 export state, No. 2 in tax climate for new firms, and No. 2 in per capita income growth. The state also ranks among the top ten for short-term job growth, job placement efficiency and tax environment for mature firms (The Advocate, June 2012).
- ◆ According to a survey of CEOs done by *Chief Executive* magazine, Louisiana ranks as the most improved state for business in the U.S., according to the magazine's 2012 Best/Worst States for Business ranking. The state ranks 13th this year, up from 27th on the list last year. The survey looks at proximity to markets and resources, industry regulation, tax policies, workforce quality and education resources (The Advocate, May 2012).
- ◆ The Index of State Economic Momentum placed Louisiana ninth among the 50 states based on three key measures of economic vitality: personal income growth, employment growth and population growth. The study was done by *Federal Funds Information for*

States, a non-partisan subscription which tracks and reports on the fiscal impact of federal budget and policy decisions on state budgets and programs (The Times Picayune, May 2012).

- ◆ In 2011, Louisiana's exports climbed 33 percent from the previous year, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration. More than \$55 billion dollars worth of Louisiana merchandise was exported overseas in 2011, setting an all-time record (The Times Picayune, March 2012).
- ◆ The Tax Foundation's ranking, *Location Matters: A Comparative Analysis of State Tax Costs on Business*, ranks Louisiana second in the U.S. and first in Southern states for new firms and 10th in the U.S. and third in Southern states for mature firms. The ranking is a 50-state analysis of business tax burdens and it indicates that Louisiana's business tax competitiveness has improved significantly over the past few years (Office of the Governor, March 2012).
- ◆ In *Site Selection* magazine's annual "Governor's Cup" rankings, Louisiana again ranked third best in the U.S. on a per capita basis and 10th overall for states that gained the most new and expanded corporate facilities in 2011. The "Governor's Cup" measures the quantity of significant business development projects for the calendar year. Baton Rouge placed first among metropolitan areas with populations between 200,000 and 1 million for the second year in a row, while Shreveport-Bossier City ranked ninth in the same category. Lake Charles tied for fourth among metropolitan areas with populations between 50,000 - 200,000 and Morgan City tied for eighth in the 10,000 - 50,000 category (Office of the Governor, February 2012).
- ◆ The Port of South Louisiana set cargo records for 2011. The amount of petrochemicals and fertilizers passing through the port helped reach the 272 million ton record, surpassing the record set in 2006 with 263 million tons (The Times Picayune, February 2012).
- ◆ Louisiana ranks third in personal income growth with a growth of .4 percent in the third quarter of 2011. The report issued by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis credits the state's increase to the health and social services sectors (The Advocate, December 2011).
- ◆ Louisiana jumped 14 spots to 30th in the latest Forbes ranking of "Best States for Business." The dramatic improvement from last year's ranking of 44th place can be attributed to a variety of factors including the state's relative economic performance and growth outlook, an increase in the number of Fortune 1000 headquarters in the state, a new assessment of state tax competitiveness, reduced energy costs and a jump in Louisiana's economic development competitiveness ranking (Office of the Governor, November 2011).

- ◆ Louisiana's business climate is ranked 7th in the country for its per capita project expansions, competitiveness and new projects attracted by *Site Selection* magazine. Louisiana moved up from 9th place in 2010, giving the state its highest ranking ever (Office of the Governor, November 2011).
- ◆ In the first quarter of 2011, the total value of Louisiana exports ranked 4th in the country, up from 8th in 2010 (CABL, October 2011).
- ◆ In the second quarter of 2011, Louisiana moved into the top 10 states for highest personal income growth, with a growth of 1.4 percent between the first and second quarters of 2011 according to a report by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. The increase is due in large part to the swelling energy, health care and natural resources sectors (The Advocate, September 2011).
- ◆ Louisiana ranks No. 6 in the U.S. in *Area Development* magazine's list of 2011 Top States for Doing Business, which surveys leading site-selection consultants on which U.S. states are the most attractive for business investment. Louisiana ranked No. 3 for states that are leading the economic recovery, No. 4 for states with the best workforce development programs and No. 4 for states with the best overall business investment (Office of the Governor, September 2011).
- ◆ According to Gary LaGrange, president and CEO of the Port of New Orleans, cargo movements through the port increased 15 percent over the first half of this year and is on pace to beat last year's record of 427,000 TEUs, or 20-foot equivalent units, a measurement for containerized shipping (The Times Picayune, September 2011).
- ◆ Louisiana's gross domestic (GDP) grew 2.6 percent in 2010, the 19th-strongest in the country. The oil and gas industry was a strong contributor to this growth (The Advocate, September 2011).
- ◆ Pollina Corporate Real Estate Inc. ranked Louisiana second in the nation for its economic development incentives, efforts and performance. Louisiana Economic Development attributes the improvement from No. 10 to No. 2 to the creation and upgrade of programs such as the Digital Interactive Media and Software incentive, Louisiana FastStart, and improved perceptions among consultants and corporate executives (Baton Rouge Business Report, August 2011).
- ◆ Louisiana had the second-largest increase among all states in the number of raw jobs created in the last five years according to *American City Business* (CABL, July 2011).
- ◆ According to a recent Fraser Institute survey of energy industry executives rating more than 130 global producing areas, Louisiana is in the top 10 percent of the most attractive

areas for exploration investment in the world (Department of Natural Resources, July 2011).

- ◆ For the third year in a row, *Southern Business and Development* named Louisiana "State of the Year," but this year Louisiana stands at the top alone, no longer tying with Tennessee. The magazine states that Louisiana attracts more significant business investment and job-creating projects per capita than any other state in the south. (Louisiana Economic Development, July 2011).
- ◆ Standard & Poor, a financial research and analysis firm, has given Louisiana its best credit rating in nearly 30 years, adjusting the state's AA- to AA and pronouncing the state's bond outlook as "stable." The firm commended the state on its lower-than-average unemployment and a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget and gave it high marks for financial management, budget and government framework (The Lake Charles American Press, May 2011).
- ◆ Louisiana's global exports rose 26.7 percent in 2010, according to The World Trade Center. The total value of the state's exports was \$41.3 billion, up from 2009's total of \$32.6 billion. This increase placed Louisiana ninth in state rankings. The state's primary exports include agricultural products, petroleum and coal products, chemicals, and food products (The Advocate, May 2011).
- ◆ The National Hurricane Conference, a forum for education and professional training in hurricane and disaster preparedness, awarded The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and Louisiana Economic Development with the 2011 National Hurricane Conference Outstanding Achievement Award for their "innovative achievement" related to hurricane preparedness (Labeoc.org, April 2011).
- ◆ Louisiana's Economic Development Department ranks first in *Site Selection's* magazine list of state economic development agencies. LED received the magazine's 2010 Competitive Award. The Baton Rouge Area Chamber, Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance and Greater New Orleans Inc. were also listed as some of the best agencies of their kind. LED was awarded the top spot partly because of Nucor Corp.'s project in St. James Parish, which was selected among the Top North American Deals for 2010 (The Advocate, May 2011).
- ◆ In *Trade & Industry Development* magazine's sixth annual Corporate Investment and Community Impact (CiCi) Awards, three of Louisiana's business development projects from 2010 received awards. Louisiana tied with North Carolina for the most project awards in the south. Nucor Corp. in Covent, La. (up to 1,250 new direct jobs) was selected as one of the top 15 new corporate investment projects. Blade Dynamics in New Orleans (600 new direct jobs) and DG Foods in Bastrop, La. (317 new direct jobs) were among the

top 15 in the U.S. for community impact projects (The Lake Charles American Press, March 2011).

- ◆ According to the "Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurial Activity," a leading indicator of new business creation in the United States, Louisiana is among the top five states having the highest entrepreneurial activity rates. The report shows that 460 per 100,000 adults created a business per month in Louisiana in 2010 (Kauffman Foundation, March 2011).
- ◆ In 2010, Louisiana agriculture contributed \$9.9 billion to the state's economy, up 20 percent from the previous year, according to the LSU AgCenter's Ag Summary. The biggest contributors to this gain were poultry and forestry (The Advocate, March 2011).
- ◆ The employer resource company Manpower Inc. released its Employment Outlook Survey which ranked Louisiana No. 1 in the nation for projected job growth in the first quarter of 2011. In Louisiana, 21 percent of employers surveyed planned to increase their staff during that time period, a greater percentage than any other state in the nation. In addition, of the top 100 metropolitan statistical areas included in the Survey, Baton Rouge ranked No. 1 with a plus 18 percent outlook (The Town Talk, January 2011).
- ◆ Louisiana's exports increased by 20 percent in the third quarter of 2010. A value equal to \$27.4 billion, according to a report issued by the World Trade Center of New Orleans. Louisiana ranks among the top ten states for export growth (The Advocate, December 2010).
- ◆ Louisiana was named 2010 "State of the Year" by *Business Facilities* magazine. The magazine, which reaches top site selection professionals, chose Louisiana as the winner because of its recent business climate reforms, business development wins in 2010, innovative incentive programs, economic growth strategy and world-class workforce training program, LED FastStart (LED, December 2010).
- ◆ A new report distributed by the Federal Bureau of Economic Analysis ranked Louisiana fifth in the nation, and first in the Southeast region, for its growth rate for the goods and services produced in 2009 in the nation. The state's gross domestic product rose 2.5 percent to \$187.93 billion in 2009 while 39 states saw declines in the value of all goods and services they produced (The Advocate, November 2010).
- ◆ Baton Rouge was ranked among the 21 strongest U.S. metro economies by the Brookings Institute. Baton Rouge's unemployment rate is at 5.9 percent, well below the U.S. average of 10.1 percent. Its one-year change in housing prices is down 4.6 percent, fifth-best in the U.S. It ranks 12th best in foreclosed properties, having 1.44 per 1,000 mortgages while the U.S. average is 4.54 per 1,000 (The Advocate, June 2010).

- ◆ Louisiana is rated as the overall best U.S. export performer by a new U.S. Chamber of Commerce study, noting that the amount of goods shipped from Louisiana has increased 69 percent since 2005. Additionally, it cites Louisiana's FastStart custom job-training program, a two-year petroleum technology degree offered through Louisiana Community and Technical College System and the state's Small Entrepreneurship program as models for national job growth (The Advocate, June 2010).
- ◆ Louisiana ranked second among U.S. states in the 2009 Competitiveness Award competition judged by *Site Selection* magazine. Scores were based on Conway Data's tracking of new and expanded facilities and plants (The Advocate, April 2010).
- ◆ Exxon Mobil Corp ranks second in *Fortune Magazine's* 500 largest American companies. Shaw Group Inc. moved up 48 spots to rank 309th in the 2010 list. Century Link, based in Monroe, became a new Louisiana Fortune 500 company rising from 753rd to 423rd after a telecommunications merger last year (The Advocate, April 2010).
- ◆ James Construction Group and MAPP Construction, both in Baton Rouge, made the list of top six contractors established by *South Central Construction*, a regional construction magazine. Nominations for the list came from six southern states (Baton Rouge Business Report, April 2010).
- ◆ Louisiana Economic Development recently received two Internet Advertising Competition awards from the Web Marketing Association, which recognizes online advertising excellence. LED won Best Government Web site and LED's digital media campaign won Best Government Online Ad (The Advocate, March 2010).
- ◆ Southwest Louisiana is being called an "Empire of Energy" in *Site Selection* magazine. This empire is highlighted by companies like Shaw Modular Solutions, Verenium, Chenier Energy, Semptra Energy and Trunkline LNG (The Lake Charles American Press, March 2010).
- ◆ According to The Daily Beast's "25 Boom States" Louisiana is third for best job growth prospects (The Daily Beast, March 2010).
- ◆ In Gallup's Job Creation Index for 2009, Louisiana tied for third among all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The poll says that this is due to Louisiana being an energy and commodity state (Gallup, January 2010).

LOCAL/CITIES

- ◆ New Orleans' Audubon Zoo is ranked among the top 10 zoos in the United States, according to the TripAdvisor Popularity Index. TripAdvisor is one of the world's largest travel web sites (Times Picayune, June 2012).

- ◆ **Baton Rouge Area Chamber was selected among Site Selection magazine's top 10 economic development organizations because of hundreds of new jobs and more than \$200 million in local investment in 2011. This is the third year in a row that BRAC made the list. (The Advocate, April 2012).**
- ◆ **Lafayette now carries the title of "South's Tastiest Town." With ten cities in the running in Southern Living magazine's competition, Lafayette took nearly 40 percent of the more than 500,000 votes cast. New Orleans earned the #3 ranking (Department of Natural Resources, March 2012).**
- ◆ **According to CNN Money, Ascension and Livingston Parishes are among the top 25 counties in the nation with the highest job growth over the past decade. Ascension ranks No. 9 with 46.6% job growth since 2000 and Livingston ranks No. 11 with 42.9% job growth since 2000. The two parishes were the only in the state to make the list, which credits the increase in job growth to heavy industry coming back to life along the lower Mississippi River (1012 Corridor, August 2011).**
- ◆ **Shreveport has been selected by *Forbes* magazine as first in the nation in terms of the cost of doing business, seventh among mid-size cities in terms of job growth, and 68th out of 200 metropolitan statistical areas for business and careers. (Shreveport Times, July 2011).**
- ◆ **According to a ranking of cities by NewGeography.com for *Forbes*, New Orleans climbed 287 places on the list of biggest job-growth gainers in the nation this year, placing it at seventh overall and second among large metros adding new jobs to the economy (1012 Corridor, May 2011).**
- ◆ **Haydel's Bakery on Jefferson Highway in New Orleans was selected as the Jeffrey Butland Family-Business of the Year by the Small Business Administration. The 51-year-old bakery was selected from a pool of 10 regional winners around the country. Its win is attributed to evidence of success as measured by sales and profits, increase in employment for family and non family members, potential for long-term business success and economic growth, and community involvement (The Times Picayune, April 2011).**
- ◆ **Baton Rouge was listed among *Forbes'* list of *Where Americans Are Getting Richer* (Yahoo! Finance, December 2010).**
- ◆ **New Orleans has been selected as a Top 10 best place for Military Retirement by USAA and Military.com. New Orleans was listed as 9th for having overall economic stability, sports teams, universities and interesting culture (New Orleans City Business, December 2010).**

- ◆ **Baton Rouge ranked 10th in Portfolio.com's Best Labor Markets For Young Adults List (Portfolio.com, March 2010).**
- ◆ **In the Brookings Institution's Metro Monitor Report, Baton Rouge ranked among the top 20 strongest-performing metro areas (metromonitor.com, March 2010).**
- ◆ **Lafayette ranked fifth and Baton Rouge ranked 10th on the Housing Predictor's list of the ten best markets in the U.S. (Housingpredictor.com, March 2010).**
- ◆ **Shreveport ranked third in *MovieMaker Magazine's* annual list of the 10 best cities in the U.S. for independent moviemakers to live, work and make movies. The criteria for the list included cost of living, employment opportunities, housing costs, crime rates and quality of life, state and city financial incentives, access to talent and local resources, as well as other factors (MovieMaker Magazine, January 2010).**

HEALTH/HOSPITALS

- ◆ **According to Gallup Healthways' annual index tracking well-being nationwide, Louisiana improved 6 places, and is ranked 11th in the nation in the life evaluation indicator, which looks at how good respondents feel their current life situation is (Department of Health and Hospitals, February 2012).**
- ◆ **Louisiana scored a perfect 100 on the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions (CDC) evaluation of the state's public health emergency preparedness and response capabilities for the second year in a row (Department of Health & Hospitals, September 2011).**
- ◆ **The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) was given a \$1.4 million bonus award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for outstanding and timely customer service in providing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, also known as food stamps. This is the third consecutive year Louisiana earned the timeliness bonus (Department of Children and Family Services, September 2010).**
- ◆ **The 2010 Recognition Award for Excellence in Human Services Information Technology was given to the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) by the 2010 American Public Human Services Association. DCFS was awarded for their Disaster Food Stamp Program which allows low to moderate income residents who think they could be impacted by a disaster to pre-apply for benefits online or by phone (Department of Children and Family Services, September 2010).**
- ◆ **Louisiana has the highest number of people registered as organ donors through the Louisiana Department of Motor Vehicles, according to statistics compiled by Donate Life America, a nonprofit group promoting organ donation. 68 percent of people say yes when asked if they would like to register as organ and tissue donors when obtaining a license or state ID. The national average is 38 percent (The Advocate, June 2010.)**

GOVERNMENT/MISC

- ◆ The Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice has been recognized by Harvard University for its innovative programming. OJJ's Service Coordination Model was recognized through the "Bright Ideas" program, an initiative of the broader Innovations in American Government Awards program at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government (The Advocate, September 2012).
- ◆ According to statistics released by the National Marine Fisheries Service, the 2011 seafood catch in the Gulf of Mexico rebounded to its highest volume since 1999. Additionally, Louisiana ports brought in the second highest amount of seafood in the United States according to a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration report. (New Orleans City Business, September 2012).
- ◆ The Louisiana State Employees Retirement System, the system for many state government workers, has been recognized in the national financial publications *Pensions & Investments*, and *FundFire*, as being among the top 10 state pension plans in the U.S. Information for the ranking was based on an analysis of 10-year annualized investment returns by Cliffwater LLC (The Advocate, July 2012).
- ◆ The U.S. Public Interest Research Group ranks LaTrac, the state government's website and online state spending database, as fourth of its kind in the nation for a second year in a row, giving it a score of "A-" for its transparency. The study annually rates transparency initiatives for all 50 states (Governing.com, March 2012).
- ◆ The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) was honored with a "Gold Award" from the 2011 MarCom Awards, an international marketing and communication competition, for its work in producing materials and holding a special education and outreach event to teach local governing authorities, eligible private non-profits and tribal governing authorities how to properly procure contacts and other services, "Getting it Right, The Practice of Procurement." (GOHSEP, January 2012).
- ◆ According to a study conducted by the Office of Emergency Communication (OEC), Louisiana "has achieved one of the most sophisticated levels of communications usage in the nation," when it comes to interoperable communications among state and local entities. The Louisiana Wireless Information Network (LWIN) allows local and state agencies to communicate on the same radio system (Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, September 2011).
- ◆ Lake Charles has been selected as one of the top best 25 places in the United States to retire by CNNMoney. The report credits the city's ranking to its outdoor appeal, numerous festivals and growing arts community (The American Press, September 2011).

- ◆ The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) set a record for the third consecutive year in collecting child support payments - more than \$365 million was collected for Fiscal Year 2010 (DCFS, February 2011).
- ◆ The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) was one of seven states to be recognized with an outstanding transportation project award given by the Southeastern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials for the department's Louisiana TIMED Program, which has resulted in almost 500 miles of improved roads, a new port, airport upgrades, and two bridge projects spanning the Mississippi River (DOTD, September 2010).
- ◆ The Reason Foundation, a nonpartisan research group, ranked Louisiana's state highways 36th in highway performance and cost-effectiveness based on information from 2008, moving it up seven spots compared to its previous year's ranking. Since Governor Jindal took office, the state has invested a total of \$3.5 billion in roads and reduced the backlog of highway projects by \$1.5 million. The state's overall improvement in its roads was noted by the foundation (The Lake Charles American Press, September 2010).
- ◆ A national study titled "Volunteering in America," an annual 50-state review by the Corporation for National and Community Service, shows that more than 707,000 Louisiana residents volunteered during 2009. Their volunteered labor totaled 103.5 million hours and provided an economic impact of nearly \$2.1 billion. The volunteer rate increased 21 percent from the year 2008 to 2009 (The Town Talk, June 2010).
- ◆ Stacey Simmons, head of the Baton Rouge Area Digital Industries Consortium and creator of the Red Stick International Animation Festival, has been selected by the magazine *Fast Company* as one of the 100 Most Creative People in 2010 for her creation of Omnicademy, a new Web portal that enables colleges and universities to exchange courses and materials over the Internet (The Advocate, May 2010).

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